



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOUR CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS INDICTED IN CHECK-CASHING CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that four California residents have been indicted by a federal grand jury for participating in a conspiracy to cash stolen U.S. Treasury checks using counterfeit identification.

Aristeo Montoya Roman, also known as Homero Pacheco, 42, **Seferino Roman Jacobo**, also known as Jacobo Seferino, 38, and **Antonio Felix-Real**, also known as Roberto Noriega, 50, all citizens of Mexico residing in Santa Ana, Calif., and **Audie Marie Soto**, also known as Audree Urbietta, 41, also of Santa Ana, were charged in a 10-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on May 19, 2005. This indictment replaces a federal criminal complaint that was filed on May 2, 2005.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that all four defendants participated in a conspiracy to cash stolen U.S. Treasury checks bearing forged endorsement signatures by using false identification documents.

When they were arrested at a Super 8 Motel in Bethany on April 26, 2005, **Roman** and **Jacobo** were allegedly in possession of 30 stolen U.S. Treasury checks having an aggregate value of \$86,539 as well as \$16,321 in cash, 52 counterfeit California driver's licenses, 40 counterfeit permanent resident alien cards, and 11 counterfeit state of California identification cards. The counterfeit identification contained the same names found on the U.S. Treasury checks, the indictment says, but bore the photos of either **Felix-Real** or **Soto**.

According to the indictment, the defendants acquired stolen U.S. Treasury checks payable to specific individuals, then produced or acquired false California identification documents bearing the names and addresses which matched those on the checks. They drove from the state of California to the state of Missouri, where **Felix-Real** and **Soto** used the false identification

documents to cash the checks at financial institutions in various cities. After cashing the stolen checks, the indictment alleges, they gave the money to **Roman**.

On April 25, 2005, **Soto** allegedly cashed a \$2,544 U.S. Treasury check at Bethany Bank Trust Company in Albany, Mo., and **Felix-Real** allegedly cashed a \$1,228 U.S. Treasury check at Bethany Bank Trust Company in Albany. In each instance, the indictment says, they presented as identification a counterfeit California driver's license bearing a name to match the payee named on the check, but with the defendant's photo.

On April 26, 2005, **Soto** allegedly cashed a \$3,446 U.S. Treasury check at Farmer's Bank in Bethany, Mo., and a \$2,864 U.S. Treasury check at Bethany Bank Trust Company in Bethany. On the same day, **Felix-Real** allegedly cashed a \$3,534 U.S. Treasury check at Farmer's Bank in Bethany. In each instance, the indictment says, they presented as identification a counterfeit California driver's license bearing a name to match the payee named on the check, but with the defendant's photo.

Counts Two through Six allege the five specific instances in which **Roman** and either **Felix-Real** or **Soto** used counterfeit identification to cash stolen U.S. Treasury checks.

Count Seven alleges that **Roman** and **Jacobo** retained and concealed 30 U.S. Treasury checks with a total face value of \$86,539, knowing that they were stolen.

Count Eight alleges that **Roman** and **Jacobo** were illegally in possession of identification documents belonging to others, with the intent to use them to illegally cash the stolen U.S. Treasury checks by forging the endorsement signatures.

Count Nine alleges that **Roman** and **Jacobo** concealed and unlawfully possessed articles (the U.S. Treasury checks) that had been stolen from the mail.

Count Ten is a forfeiture count, which would require **Roman**, **Jacobo**, **Felix-Real** and **Soto** to forfeit to the government any property derived from the alleged offenses, including \$16,321 seized from a Dodge Durango on April 26, 2005; \$1,887 seized from **Roman** on the same day; and \$1,534 seized from **Jacobo** on the same day.

Roman, **Jacobo**, and **Felix-Real** remain in federal custody.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney D. Michael Green. It was investigated by the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Bethany, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow